

NOTICE OF INTENT FOR A “DEAR COLLEAGUE” LETTER

August 20, 2012

The National Reconnaissance Observatory (NRO) has recently transferred to NASA optical hardware the equivalent of two Hubble-class optical telescopes. The description of these telescope assets can be found at <http://science.nasa.gov/science-committee/subcommittees/nac-astrophysics-subcommittee/> and click on the presentation by Moore for the July 30-31, 2012 meeting). This Notice of Intent is to alert the astrophysical community that the Astrophysics Division in the Science Mission Directorate at NASA HQ intends to release a “Dear Colleague” letter to solicit applications from interested individuals for the formation of a study group for the possible scientific use(s) of the ex-NRO telescope assets for advancing the science priorities of the 2010 Decadal Survey (*New Worlds New Horizons*; available at http://sites.nationalacademies.org/BPA/BPA_048094).

The “Dear Colleague” letter will be issued by NASA no earlier than **August 31, 2012**. **Applications will be due approximately 2 weeks after the issuance of the “Dear Colleague” letter.**

The Science Definition Team (SDT) will consist of 12-15 members of the astrophysics community with extensive scientific and/or technical background in the science areas outlined by the Decadal Survey. The primary tasks of the SDT will be to assess the possible use(s) of the telescope assets in the following two cases:

- i. Use of the telescope assets “as is” to advance the science priorities described in the 2010 Decadal Survey for a Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope; and
- ii. Use of the telescope assets “as is” plus a coronagraph defined in a parallel study to advance the science priorities described in the 2010 Decadal Survey for the detection and study of exoplanets.

The findings of the SDT will be provided in a report to NASA no later than April 30, 2013. Please see the timetable below for the anticipated milestones.

Applicants from U.S.-based research and academic institutions, government laboratories, and industry will be asked to submit to NASA a cover letter describing the reasons for their interest in the SDT and the capabilities and experiences that they bring to the SDT, a statement of commitment to perform the tasks assigned to the SDT within the allocated timeframe, and a 1-page resume.

Only travel expenses to participate in face-to-face SDT meetings will be covered by NASA.

Only U.S. citizens are allowed to apply due to the export-controlled nature of the assets.

NASA reserves the right to cancel the issue of the “Dear Colleague Letter” at any time should programmatic and/or other reasons warrant it.

Tentative Schedule

August 31, 2012	“Dear Colleague” letter issued by NASA
September 19, 2012	Applications material due to NASA
October 5, 2012	Selections announced
November 2012	First SDT meeting
April 30, 2013	SDT report due

Questions that cannot wait for the issuance of the “Dear Colleague Letter” may be addressed to Dr. Rita Sambruna, Astrophysics Division, Science Mission Directorate, NASA Headquarters, at rita.m.sambruna@nasa.gov or (202) 358-2166.